



# Committee on **HOMELAND SECURITY** Chairman Peter T. King

## **Opening Statement**

June 6, 2012

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### **Statement of Chairman Gus Bilirakis (R-FL) Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications**

#### **"The National Preparedness Report: Assessing the State of Preparedness"**

**June 6, 2012  
Remarks as Prepared**

At the start of another hurricane season and with no evidence that the terrorist threat to the United States will decline, it is important that this Subcommittee has an accurate picture of the level of preparedness across the country.

Anecdotally, we are all aware of advancements made in preparedness. One need only look at the responses to the tornadoes in Joplin and Hurricane Irene to see evidence of enhanced preparedness and response capabilities at the State and local levels. However, there is more to the story and it is my hope that the recently released National Preparedness Report will help us gain a better understanding of the work that remains to be done to ensure a prepared and resilient Nation.

It is important to note that this National Preparedness Report has been a long time coming. Section 652 of the Post Katrina Emergency Management

Reform Act (PKEMRA) requires the annual completion of a federal preparedness report to assess national preparedness. PPD – 8, signed by President Obama in March 2011, further required the completion of a report assessing national preparedness. The first such report was completed in January 2009. However, another report was not completed until the National Preparedness Report was released last month.

There is no doubt we've made great strides in our level of preparedness since September 11th and Hurricane Katrina. However, we must have the ability to measure that preparedness to determine steps still necessary to achieve core capabilities. It is my hope that this National Preparedness Report will mark the beginning of an annual assessment, as required by PKEMRA; one that includes validated information received through surveys of stakeholders and that truly includes the input of the whole community.

I am pleased that Deputy Administrator Manning is here today to explain the methodology behind the Report and how the report's findings, coupled with needed performance measures for the grant programs, will help inform efforts going forward to enhance core capabilities at the Federal, State, and local levels and with our non-profit and private sector partners. I hope he will provide us with his frank assessment of the shortcomings identified in the report and ways in which FEMA, working with the whole community, plans to address them.

I am particularly interested in the perspectives on this report of our experts on the second panel and from GAO. What are the strengths of this report and how could future iterations be enhanced to provide a better picture of where we stand and where we need to go in the future.

With that, I welcome all of our witnesses. I look forward to your testimony on this very important topic.